THE WANDERER

104TH EDITION 1 JAN 2020 #WSWvBRI

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Turner Freeman
LAWYERS

DOUBLE HEADER

WESTERN SYDNEY WANDERERS FC

SUNDAY 19 JANUARY

GATES 3:45PM

WANDERLAND

PERTH GLORY FC

KICK-OFF 4:00PM

DOUBLE ACTION

KICK-OFF 6:30PM

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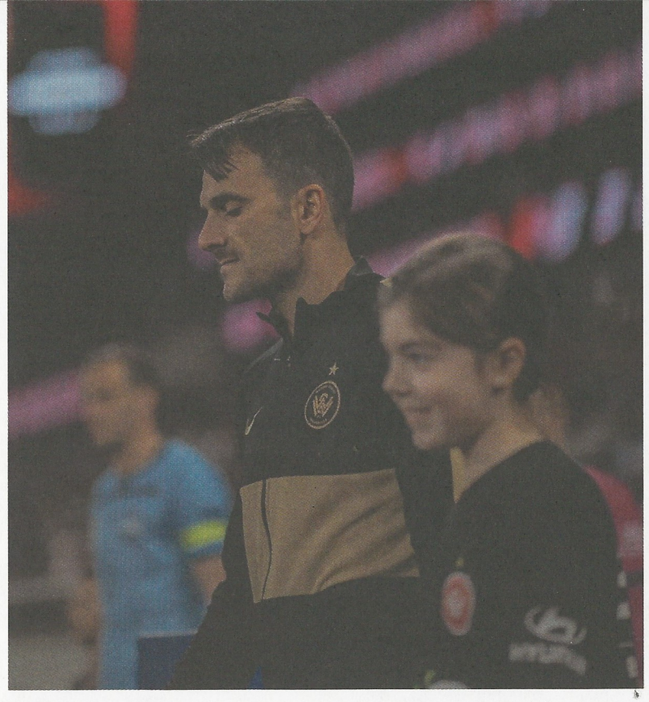

THIS MATCH

FEATURES

BREAKING THE MOULD 8
Understated Dani Lopar is not your typical shot stopper.

A CHANGE OF FORTUNE 14
Nick Sullivan is nothing if not resolute and determined

HUYNH BLEEDS RED & BLACK 20
You can take the girl out of the west, but you can't take the west out of the girl

O'SULLIVAN RIGHT AT HOME 22
It hasn't taken Denise O'Sullivan long to feel a sense of belonging at the Red & Black

REGULAR COLUMNS

THE LETTER 5

WARM UP 6

PLAYERS TO WATCH 13
Brought to you by Turner and Freeman

TODAY'S MATCH 16

JUNIOR WANDERER ZONE 18

TAKE FIVE 25
Brought to you by Turner and Freeman

IN THE COMMUNITY 27

CORPORATE NEWS 29

OUR PARTNERS 31

THE WANDERER
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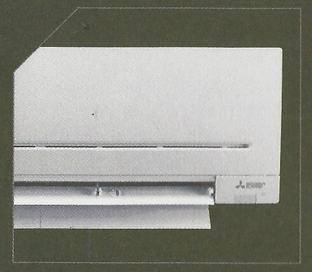

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*1Optional upgrade adapter required per unit.

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MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC

JAMIE SOWARD

WANDERERS AMBASSADOR AND MEMBER

I HAVE BEEN to some big games around the world, but I can honestly say being at Wanderland and watching the Red & Black play in front of the passionate fans of Western Sydney is something very special. I have always loved the atmosphere created by the RBB and all the fans, it rivals anything I have seen around the world because they are full on for 90 minutes, singing and chanting and showing all their emotions. It certainly drew me to the club from the very first day I attended a game back in 2015. I remember my wife and I turned up beautifully dressed in a suit and nice dress only to be jokingly heckled by a few people. What makes it extra special is the fact the club is always progressive, always looking to engage with their fans base. What the Wanderers are doing by having double headers is great because they are not separating women's football. They are improving the game of football and I like think we are leading the way in that regard. It is fantastic to see the Westfield W-League team doing so well under Dean Heffernan, Michael Beauchamp and Catherine Cannuli. Cath is a real character and I enjoy the banter with her whenever we have her on Fox Sports. The women's team struggled last year through injuries and did not quite get it right so it is fantastic to see them doing so well. I am sure finals football is beckoning for them for the first time in their history. The men's side did so well early but have been unlucky the past month, but the passion shown by coach Markus Babbel defines you as a club when you go through those hard times. I believe we will make the finals and give the title a shake. Now I just want Mitchell Duke to score tonight and give me his jersey and I'll be a very happy man! W

PRIDE. POWER. WEST.

MATCH PREVIEW

(Top to bottom) Tarek Elrich leading the drills, Bruce Kamau all smiles at training

THE LAST TIME they met, expectations of a goal-fest failed to materialise after the Wanderers and Brisbane Roar shared the spoils in a 0-0 draw at Bankwest Stadium in a round four Hyundai A-League encounter.

Some 59 days later, the two clubs are back to do it all over again in Round 13 at the same place but, hopefully, with a bit more excitement and a different outcome - a win for the Red & Black.

It has been a tough run for the unlucky Wanderers over the past five weeks or so with things not quite going their way. Importantly, however, they refuse to drop their heads and have continued to work hard and show huge commitment.

Previous games between the Wanderers and the Roar have always proved highly productive in terms of plenty of action and an abundance of goals, so much so that the fixture has produced a whopping 75 goals in 26 games - 35 of them have come in Sydney.

The Wanderers have had the better of the Queenslander's in recent seasons having recorded three wins and three draws from the last six encounters.

What has been notable about those six games is the fact that they have produced a total of 16 goals, including the Wanderers 4-1 away win last season.

Overall, the Wanderers have won 10 and drawn nine of the 26 games against the Queenslander's.

Importantly, the Red & Black hold a good advantage over the Roar when playing at home.

In 13 games, they have won five and drawn five on home territory and scored 19 goals in the process.

FIELD REPORTER

CATHERINE CANNULI
@CANNULI_13

2020 IS GOING to be the year of the Wanderers, you heard it here first.

2019 was a year of rebuilding for our Westfield W-League team and I could not be prouder of the place we are at now.

The 2018/19 season was disappointing to say the least, having not reached the heights we had expected.

This season though, we've had a massive turnaround and that has to be credited to our amazing coaching staff led by Dean Heffernan as well as Michael Beauchamp, as well as the determination and tenacity of this season's Westfield W-League team.

We have recruited really well this season and we have quality all over the park in both local and international talent.

This season could also be the year that one of the girls breaks my golden boot record with Kristen Hamilton on track to break it.

Following our Boxing Day clash against Canberra United at McKellar Park, the girls have a bye this week to prepare for our next home game on Sunday 12 January against Brisbane Roar at Marconi Stadium.

Marconi is a great family venue and it's set to be our second-last match there this season when we host Brisbane.

Brisbane Roar have had a rollercoaster of a season so far and we know what to expect having already faced them in Round 3 of the competition.

We came out on top 3-1 after a dominate display by the team that saw Hamilton score the club's very first hat-trick.

Hamilton scored twice in the first half then added another in the second half in what was a very historic night for us.

The goal also took Hamilton's tally to four goals in three games at the start of the season. Despite the Roar playing their line high and continuously pressing, our Wander Women stood tall and made sure that they fought for the crest.

I have no doubt that our next match against Roar will another night of exciting football and I hope to see you all there. A reminder the Wanderers members get free entry.

ON THIS DAY

ON THIS DAY in 2012, we hosted our very first New Year's Day fixture at Wanderland! Melbourne Victory came to town for the second time that season and a special Shinji Ono double secured all three points against the side.

THE MEMBERS' BAR IS BACK!
EXCLUSIVE TO MEMBERS
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SHOW YOUR PASS TO GET ENTRY
THE GOOD FIRE EMPORIUM
MEMBERSHIP PARTNER

BREAKING THE MOULD

UNDERSTATED DANI LOPAR IS NOT YOUR TYPICAL SHOT STOPPER

RAY GATT
@GATTY54

LEGENDARY ITALIAN GOALKEEPER Gigi Buffon once said: "In the end, you need to be a little masochistic to be a goalkeeper. A masochist and egocentric as well."

That might be the case with the majority of goalkeepers around the world, but there are always exceptions to that hard and fast rule.

Certainly, not all goalkeepers are the crazy men they are made out to be.

Take, for instance, Wanderers goalkeeper Daniel Lopar.

Sit down for a chat with the quietly spoken former Swiss international and the thing that strikes you after just a few minutes is that he is far from your archetypal goalkeeper.

What you see is what you get from Lopar both on and off the field.

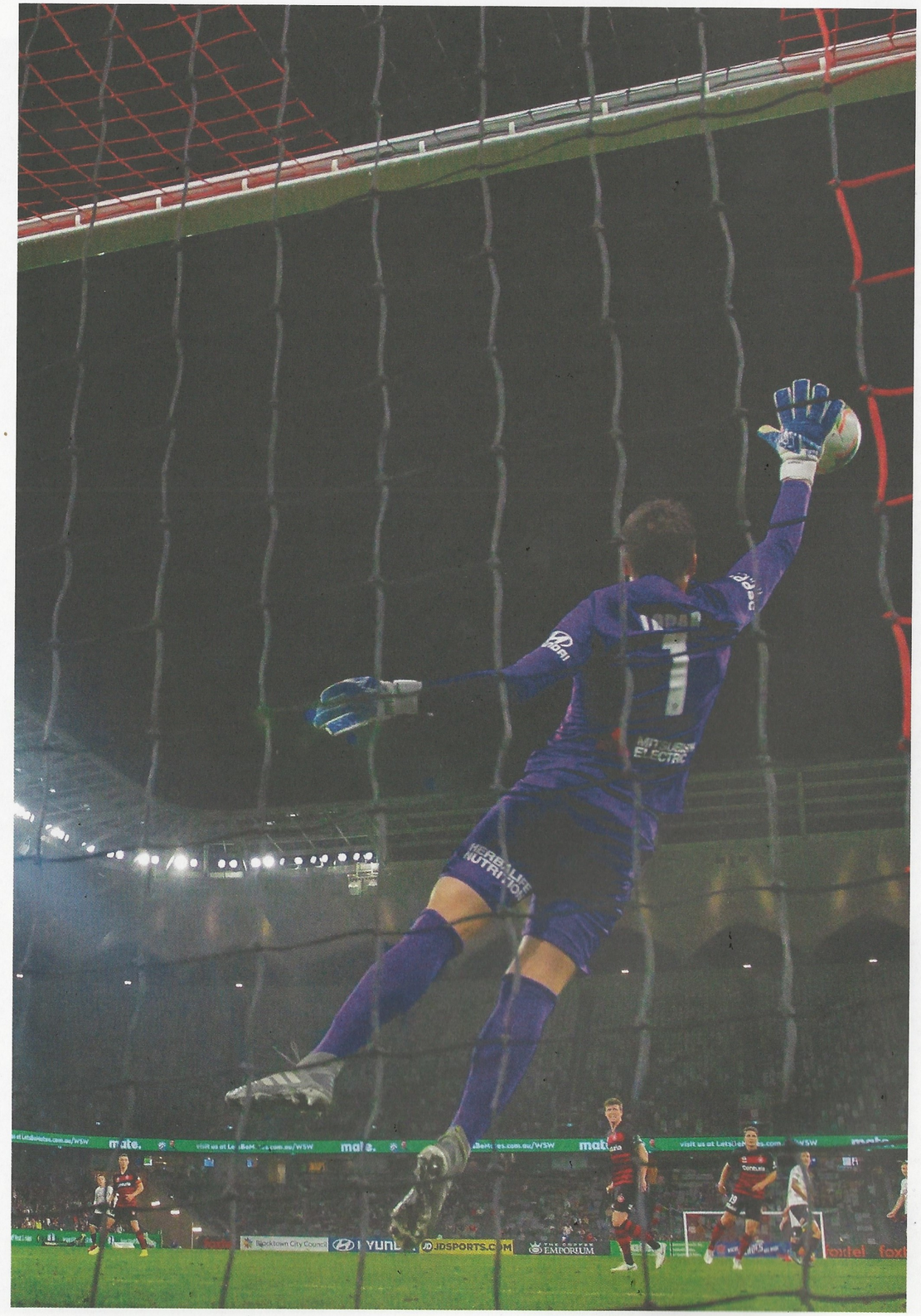
He is a no fuss, no extrovert sort of guy who goes about his work with a minimum of fuss.

Instead, Lopar prefers to do his talking on the field - and how.

The Red & Black gloveman, who signed with the club in May, has been a revelation in the Hyundai A-League this season, earning the highest praise for his performances in the first third of the season.

Lopar has come to the rescue of the Wanderers a number of times with statistics showing he has made close to 40 saves - second only to Central Coast's Mark Birighitti.

In a season in which there have been some remarkable goalkeeping performances right across the A-League, Lopar's shot stopping has been an eye-opener and has earned him a number of spots in the A-League team of the round.



(Previous page) Lopar making a world-class save against Melbourne City
(This page) Lopar getting ready to distribute the ball against Newcastle Jets

The 34-year-old has certainly justified head coach Markus Babbel's faith in luring the relatively unknown (to Australian football fans at least) goalkeeper to Australia.

During his time coaching Luzern in the Swiss league, Babbel experienced first hand just how good Lopar is at his job.

Playing for St Gallen, where he spent 13 years and 300 games, Lopar was a huge thorn in the side of Babbel's then club.

In the four times they met that season, Lopar was like a brick wall as Luzern failed to score against him.

"I don't know why, but against Luzern I always had a good game. They did not score against me and I always kept a clean sheet against them," said Lopar.

As painful as those games might have been for Babbel, the Wanderers boss obviously never forgot them so it was it was a "no brainer" that Lopar was top of the list when he started looking to strengthen the goalkeeping ranks at the club.

Lopar jumped at the opportunity for a new adventure when the Wanderers came knocking, not just for himself by for his young family.

"I knew it was the right time to do something different," explained Lopar.

"I was at St Gallen for 13 years and I wanted a new challenge.

"My daughter is two and is the right age for a new adventure."

It made the 34-year-old's decision even easier knowing that he would have a familiar at the Red & Black with the club having signed former Swiss international Pirmin Schwegler, who he knew from their younger days in the Swiss junior national teams.

"I knew Pirmin from our youth days, so it was good to have someone like him at the club," added Lopar.

As to the footballers he looked up to, Lopar cites former German great Oliver Kahn as the biggest influence in his career. Kahn played over 700 games in the Bundesliga and was capped 86 times for his country.

"It was always Oliver Kahn from Bayern Munich," said Lopar.

"I liked his mentality as a player on the pitch and he was always a good example on and off the pitch."

Lopar said he is enjoying playing in the A-League and is not surprised by the quality of the competition.

"It is a league that is growing up. I saw some games on television so I knew it is good," added Lopar.

While he says his focus is strongly on the Wanderers and getting them success, Lopar tries to ensure he is not totally consumed with football as he likes nothing better than to explore the sights of Sydney and the surrounding areas.

"I settled in very good with the football and the club," said Lopar.

"My family and I like it. We wanted to enjoy the culture. We picked a big bus tour when we first got here.

"I was in Manly and I also saw all the beaches. It's a wonderful city and a high quality of life, the same as back home."

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9
GAMES PLAYED THIS SEASON

DANIEL LOPAR		JAMIE YOUNG
73.9%	SAVE SUCCESS RATE	56.3%
2	CLEAN SHEETS	1
12	CLEARANCES	0
115	SUCCESSFUL PASSES	35
2	FOULS WON	0

3
GAMES PLAYED THIS SEASON

DANIEL LOPAR
#1 GOALKEEPER

JAMIE YOUNG
#21 GOALKEEPER

WE ARE THE WEST.

A CHANGE OF FORTUNE

NICK SULLIVAN IS NOTHING IF NOT RESOLUTE AND DETERMINED.

SULLIVAN HAS HAD to be given some of the rotten cards he has been dealt in his desire to live the dream and make a name for himself in the unforgiving world of professional football.

Now back at the Wanderers, where Sullivan was once a member of the club's foundation National Youth League squad, the midfielder is relishing his time in the Red & Black after signing a one year deal in August.

It is far removed from some of the tough times Sullivan had to endure during his spell trying to establish himself overseas, especially in Portugal where he had to work two days a week as a volunteer in a hostel to supplement the measure income from football.

"I couldn't afford to pay for accommodation and food because of the poor wage I was getting from the club, so I worked as a volunteer at a hostel," said Sullivan.

"I would train five days a week and on the two days off I would work at the hotel making beds and cooking for the residents.

"I really had no time to myself so I just had to suck it up."

It was a steep learning curve, but one that has done little to dim the 21-year-old's fierce determination to try his luck overseas again one day.

"That's my dream, to try it again," said Sullivan.

"I want to play in a Champions League, I want to walk out on the field to the Champions League fanfare.

"Of course, I'd also love to play for the Socceroos at a World Cup one day."

Sullivan played his junior football for Lilli Pilli before going overseas at 15 to join Belgium's Club Brugge, where he spent two seasons.

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(This page) Sullivan celebrates with teammates during the Wanderers clash with Melbourne Victory

He returned home and linked with the Wanderers youth league squad in 2015 before Europe beckoned again.

Unfortunately, things didn't work out. Like too many young players around the world, Sullivan was let down badly.

"It was a tough time. There were promises made about a contract with a club," recalled Sullivan.

"I returned home but when I went back two weeks later they didn't want to know me.

"I got stuck looking for another club."

Sullivan is hugely appreciative of the club have shown in him and wants to make a good fist of his time at the Wanderers.

A late starter at pre-season and hampered by injury, Sullivan nonetheless impressed the Red & Black enough to earn his Hyundai A-League debut in the starting XI in the opening match of the season against Central Coast Mariners.

Sullivan then played the entire game in the 2-1 win over Melbourne Victory before suffering an injury early in the second half in the Sydney Derby.

Despite being sidelined for a month, Babbel instantly recalled him to the starting line-up against Melbourne City, where he played 58 minutes before his condition told.

"Markus threw me in at the deep end at the start of the season and I took the opportunity," added Sullivan. .

"I've really enjoyed it back at the Wanderers.

"It was disappointing to get injured in the Sydney Derby and having to spend some more time on the sideline. But, I have worked hard to get back to where I was.

"I'm looking forward to making a good contribution to the team for the rest of the season."

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TONIGHT'S MATCH

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SCORE

SQUAD

S	B	#	NAME	POSITION	SPONSOR
☐	☐	1	DANIEL **LOPAR**	GOALKEEPER	MCDONALD'S
☐	☐	4	DYLAN **McGOWAN**	DEFENDER	ACCESS FIRE
☐	☐	5	DANIEL **GEORGIEVSKI**	DEFENDER	VACCARO GROUP
☐	☐	6	MATTHEW **JURMAN**	DEFENDER	MATE
☐	☐	7	MITCHELL **DUKE**	FORWARD	PEPPER MONEY
☐	☐	8	JORDAN **O'DOHERTY**	MIDFIELDER	JD SPORTS
☐	☐	9	NICOLAI **MÜLLER**	FORWARD	STULZ
☐	☐	10	RADOSLAW **MAJEWSKI**	MIDFIELDER	
☐	☐	11	BRUCE **KAMAU**	FORWARD	CASTLE HILL HYUNDAI
☐	☐	13	TASS **MOURDOUKOUTAS**	DEFENDER	TRINITAS GROUP
☐	☐	14	ALEX **MEIER**	FORWARD	TURNER FREEMAN LAWYERS
☐	☐	16	MATHIEU **CORDIER**	DEFENDER	BELLROCK BROKING
☐	☐	17	KEANU **BACCUS**	MIDFIELDER	BEST SIGNS
☐	☐	19	PIRMIN **SCHWEGLER**	MIDFIELDER	CENTURIA
☐	☐	20	VEDRAN **JANJETOVIC**	GOALKEEPER	JOE BLACK
☐	☐	21	TAREK **ELRICH**	DEFENDER	CLUB MARCONI
☐	☐	22	NICHOLAS **SULLIVAN**	MIDFIELDER	A.S.S. FENCING
☐	☐	23	KOSTA **GROZOS**	MIDFIELDER	GPP EXCAVATIONS
☐	☐	27	KWAME **YEBOAH**	FORWARD	REES ELECTRICAL
☐	☐	28	FABIAN **MONGE**	MIDFIELDER	CHOICE PHARMACY
☐	☐	29	DANIEL **WILMERING**	MIDFIELDER	WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY
☐	☐	31	NOAH **PAGDEN**	DEFENDER	BELLROCK BROKING
☐	☐	33	TATE **RUSSELL**	DEFENDER	INDUSTRIAL HARVEST
☐	☐	34	PATRICK **ZIEGLER**	DEFENDER	MULTIQUIP
☐	☐	35	MOHAMED **ADAM**	FORWARD	LANDSCAPE SOLUTIONS
☐	☐	40	NICHOLAS **SUMAN**	GOALKEEPER	HERTZ

COACH

MARCUS **BABBEL**

ASSISTANT COACHES

JEAN-PAUL **DE MARIGNY**
LABINOT **HALITI**
DAVIDE **DEL GIOVINE**

SUBSTITUTES

OFF	ON

HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE

LADDER

CORRECT AS OF ROUND 11

#	CLUB	P	W	D	L	PTS
1	SYDNEY FC	10	8	1	1	25
2	MELBOURNE CITY FC	10	6	1	3	19
3	WESTERN UNITED FC	11	5	2	4	17
4	PERTH GLORY	10	4	3	3	15
5	ADELAIDE UNITED	9	5	0	4	15
6	WELLINGTON PHOENIX	10	3	3	4	12
7	MELBOURNE VICTORY	11	3	3	5	12
8	WANDERERS FC	10	3	2	5	11
9	CENTRAL COAST MARINERS	9	3	1	5	10
10	BRISBANE ROAR FC	9	2	2	5	8
11	NEWCASTLE JETS	9	2	2	5	8

ROUND 13 MATCHES

WUFC vs Wellington Phoenix — SCORE
Central Coast Mariners vs Newcastle Jets — SCORE
Sydney FC vs Adelaide United — SCORE
Melbourne Victory vs Newcastle Jets — SCORE

BYE: Perth Glory

Westfield W-LEAGUE

LADDER

CORRECT AS OF ROUND 6

#	CLUB	P	W	D	L	PTS
1	MELBOURNE CITY FC	6	5	1	0	16
2	WANDERERS FC	5	4	1	0	13
3	SYDNEY FC	6	4	0	2	12
4	CANBERRA UNITED	6	3	1	2	10
6	BRISBANE ROAR FC	5	2	1	2	7
7	MELBOURNE VICTORY	5	1	2	2	5
8	NEWCASTLE JETS	5	1	1	3	4
9	PERTH GLORY	5	0	1	4	1
10	ADELAIDE UNITED	5	0	0	5	0

P PLAYED W WINS D DRAW L LOSS PTS POINTS

ROUND 8 MATCHES

Brisbane Roar FC vs Wanderers FC — SCORE
Adelaide United vs Perth Glory — SCORE
Melbourne Victory vs Newcastle Jets — SCORE
Canberra United vs Sydney FC — SCORE

BYE

SCORE

SQUAD

#	NAME	POSITION	S	B
1	MAX **CROCOMBE**	GOALKEEPER	☐	☐
2	SCOTT **NEVILLE**	DEFENDER	☐	☐
4	DANIEL **BOWELS**	DEFENDER	☐	☐
5	TOM **ALDRED**	DEFENDER	☐	☐
6	MACAULAY **GILLESPHEY**	DEFENDER	☐	☐
7	JAI **INGHAM**	FORWARD	☐	☐
8	JACOB **PEPPER**	MIDFIELDER	☐	☐
9	ROY **O'DONOVAN**	FORWARD	☐	☐
10	BRADDEN **INMAN**	MIDFIELDER	☐	☐
12	AIDEN **O'NEILL**	MIDFIELDER	☐	☐
13	STEFAN **MAUK**	MIDFIELDER	☐	☐
14	GEORGE **MELLS**	MIDFIELDER	☐	☐
15	AARON **REARDON**	DEFENDER	☐	☐
19	JAKE **HINGERT**	DEFENDER	☐	☐
20	AARON **AMANDI-HOLLOWAY**	FORWARD	☐	☐
21	JAMIE **YOUNG**	GOALKEEPER	☐	☐
22	JAKE **McGING**	MIDFIELDER	☐	☐
23	DYLAN **WENZEL-HALLS**	FORWARD	☐	☐
24	CONNOR **O'TOOLE**	DEFENDER	☐	☐
25	RAHMAT **AKBARI**	MIDFIELDER	☐	☐
26	JAY **O'SHEA**	MIDFIELDER	☐	☐
27	KAI **TREWIN**	DEFENDER	☐	☐
28	IZAACK **POWELL**	DEFENDER	☐	☐
29	JORDAN **COURTNEY-PERKINS**	DEFENDER	☐	☐
31	MACKLIN **FRECKE**	GOALKEEPER	☐	☐

COACH

ROBBIE **FOWLER**

ASSISTANT COACHES

DARREN **DAVIES**
TONY **GRANT**

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WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR!

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you spot the five differences below?

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE ANSWERS: 1. Daniel Georgievski and his mascot are missing; 2. The branding on Dylan McGowan's mascot is missing; 3. The Wanderers logo is missing from the LED; 4. The stripe is missing from Nicolai Müller's jacket; 5. One of the Flag Bearers' legs is missing. JUNIOR QUIZ ANSWERS: 1. Twice, 2. Brisbane Roar, 3. Six, 4. Erica Halloway and Mitchell Duke.

TRAIN UP! GET YOUR TOPS NOW

VISIT THE OUTLETS AT
GATES A, B AND D

WANDERERSSHOP.COM.AU

THE CORNER POST

It's our first column for 2020 how cool!

It also marks the halfway point of the season for our Westfield W-League and Hyundai A-League teams plus it's also the best time of the year... School Holiday!

To keep entertained this year we've been heading out to some of our holiday clinics located all over the Western Sydney region and it's been great to see so many junior Wanderers out and about.

Powered by our friends at Soccer Kickstart, clinics follow the FFA Curriculum and you're guaranteed to have a great time developing your football skills in dynamic high-quality sessions.

If you can't make it to any of our clinics in January, don't stress! We run them every school holidays.

If you see us around tonight make you sure you say hi and get a photo with us!

JUNIOR QUIZ

1. After tonight's match how many times have the Wanderers faced the Roar this season?
2. Who will the Wanderers take on in their next Westfield W-League home match?
3. How many games are left of the Westfield W-League season?
4. Name both Wanderers captains.

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HUYNH BLEEDS RED & BLACK

YOU CAN TAKE THE GIRL OUT OF THE WEST, BUT YOU CAN'T TAKE THE WEST OUT OF THE GIRL.

YOU CAN TAKE the girl out of the West but you can't take the West out of the girl is a good way to describe how hugely talented defender Alex Huynh feels about playing for the Western Sydney Wanderers.

Born and raised in the Sydney south west suburb of Sadlier, not too far up the road from the Wanderers home base in Rooty Hill, it is fair to say Huynh bleeds Red & Black.

Huynh was a member of the inaugural Wanderers Westfield W-League squad in 2012 and is now into her third stint with the club.

"I can't stay away. I was born in Western Sydney and it would have been rude of me not to play for the club," said Huynh.

"Honestly, I don't think I'd play for another club.

"I was literally here from day one and sometimes we didn't even have change rooms, so it is a massive difference to come back here and see what they have done and to be part of an exciting, new era."

Huynh, who last played for the club in season 2017/18, has returned to the Wanderers after spending a number of years in the US college system with the Colorado Buffaloes.

A pacy centre-back, the 25-year-old has played a huge role in the emergence of the Wanderers as a major force in the Westfield W-League this season.

Huynh has looked safe and assured at the back with her ability to read the game, and her tackling is precise and her passing is quality.

"Yes, I am happy with my form but there are definitely things I can improve on," explained Huynh.

"When you are winning its so easy to think everything is going well, but there is stuff I have to work on."

Importantly, the 25-year-old has formed an eye-catching combination in the heart of the defence with American import Sam Staab, who is in her first season with the Red & Black.

It has been a joy to see the two work so well in unison despite the fact they did not know each other or even played together until just before the start of the season.

"The way we play is very different but we complement each other," said Huynh.

"We have very different styles but at the same time there's that trust and respect and it makes it so easy to play alongside her.

"I met Sam maybe like a week before the season started. As a centre-back it is so crucial to get to know each other.

"She is such a good person, so easy to talk to and get along with."

Having spent so much time at the Wanderers, Huynh is aware of the struggles the W-League side have had.

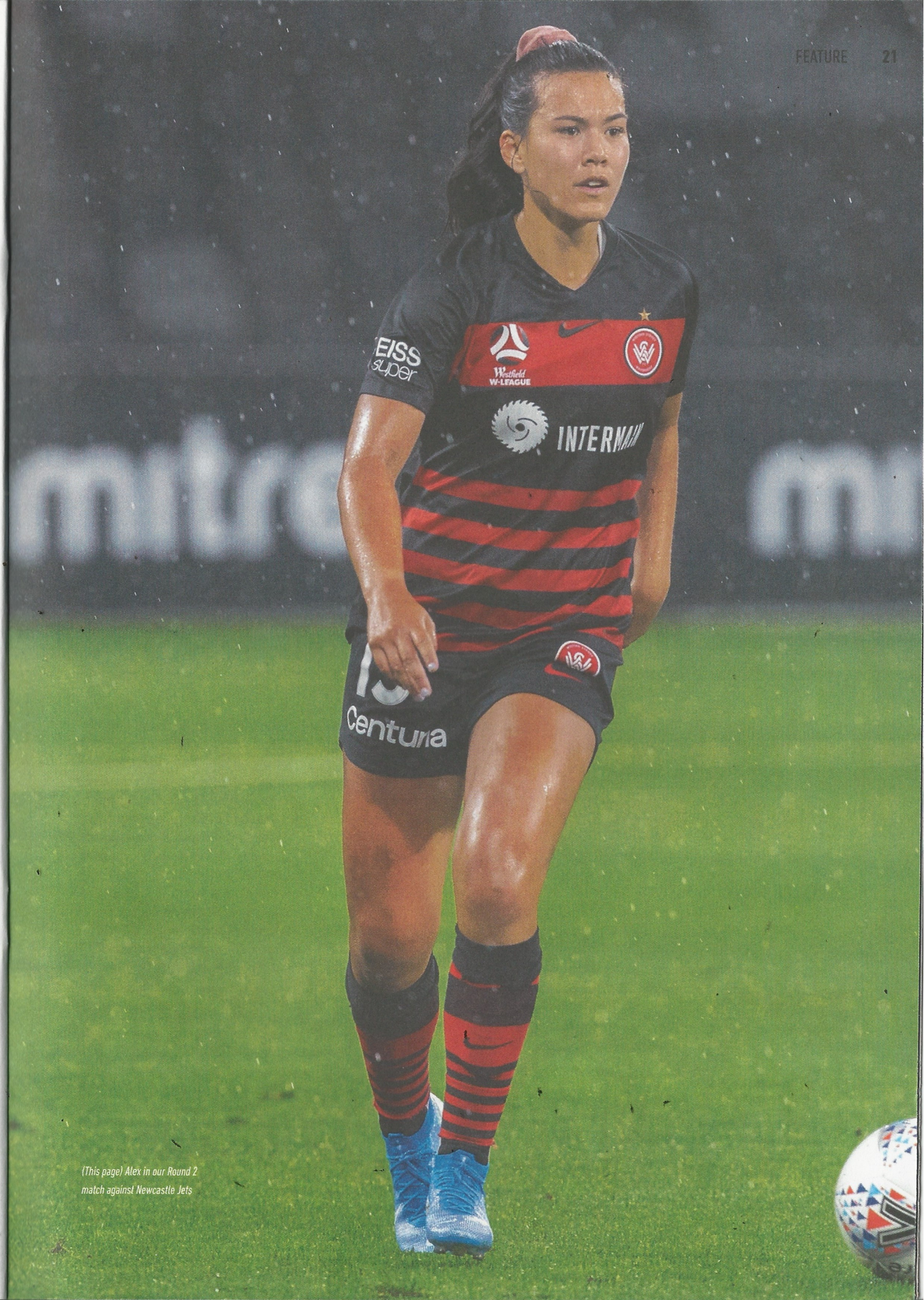
The Wanderers have never made the finals and have been regarded as the easy-beats of the league.

Understandably, Huynh is delighted in the turnaround in fortunes this season as the club marches on to a historic spot in the playoffs.

"There have been a few seasons where everyone expected us to lose and it was kinda hard to go into a game knowing you were always the underdog," added Huynh.

"It is great there has been such a great change shift in mentality here and that the club is making a huge effort to improve the things."

CATCH OUR W-LEAGUE TEAM IN ACTION ON SUNDAY 12 JANUARY AT MARCONI STADIUM WHEN THEY HOST BRISBANE ROAR. MEMBERS GET FREE ENTRY.



(This page) Alex in our Round 2 match against Newcastle Jets

O'SULLIVAN RIGHT AT HOME

IT HASN'T TAKEN DENISE O'SULLIVAN LONG TO FEEL A SENSE OF BELONGING AT THE RED & BLACK

MOST PLAYERS AROUND the world would run a mile if approached to play for a club that had won one game the previous season, finished last on the table and had never made the playoffs in seven seasons.

And when you are someone of the quality of star Republic of Ireland midfielder Denise O'Sullivan, there's a good chance of clubs of fair bigger quality and standing are knocking down your door to sign for them.

But, just like she plays her football on the pitch, O'Sullivan is never one to shy away from a challenge.

"It is really fitting for me coming to the Wanderers with the underdog term because that is a term we used a lot at the Courage," said O'Sullivan.

"The Wanderers are the underdogs. I think they only won one game last season.

"But, I can see that there is plenty of heart and fight in the girls. They just fight for each other and work very hard."

O'Sullivan said she did not have to think long about signing with the Red & Black, a side that has been a perennial struggler in the Westfield W-League.

"I thought about it ... but not for long," said O'Sullivan.

"I was speaking with (her former W-League side) Canberra at the time.

"But with my North Carolina teammates Lynn (Williams) and Kristen (Hamilton) coming here, I felt it would be good for me to keep playing with them as well and to get better together.

"The challenge was coming to a team that had only won one game last year, so I thought if I could come along and help them then that would be good."

O'Sullivan has only been at the club for a month after missing the first game of the season because of international duty with the Republic of Ireland.

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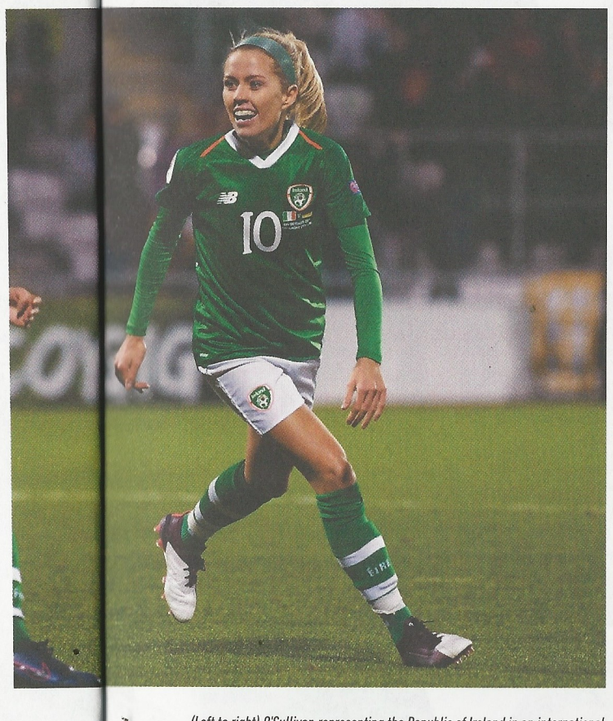

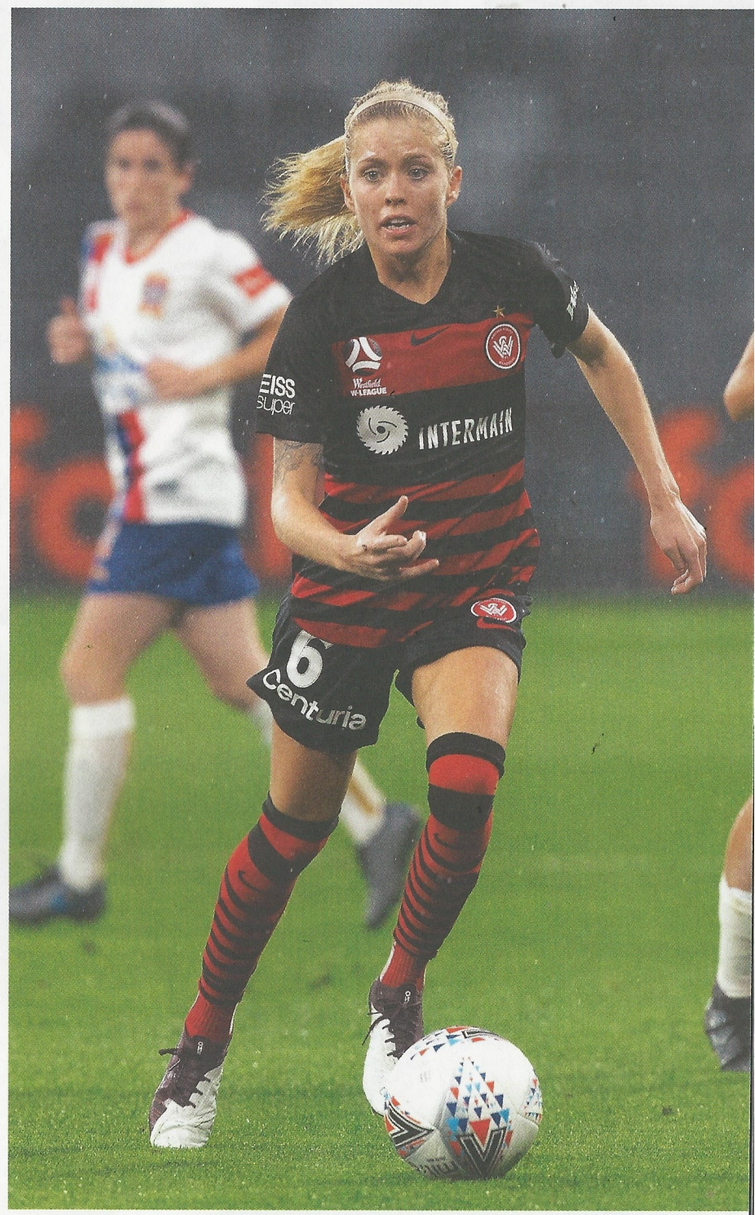

(Left to right) O'Sullivan representing the Republic of Ireland in an international friendly; Playing in our Round 2 match against Newcastle Jets at Bankwest Stadium

However, she appears to have fitted in seamlessly into the side, which is unbeaten in their opening four games of the season.

"I love it here. It's really good. I arrived about a month ago and the club is just great and everyone has made me feel so welcome," said O'Sullivan.

"The facilities are great, you have everything in the one place, the gym, the good pitches. I am very impressed.

"Football wise, it is going great. We could not have asked for a better start."

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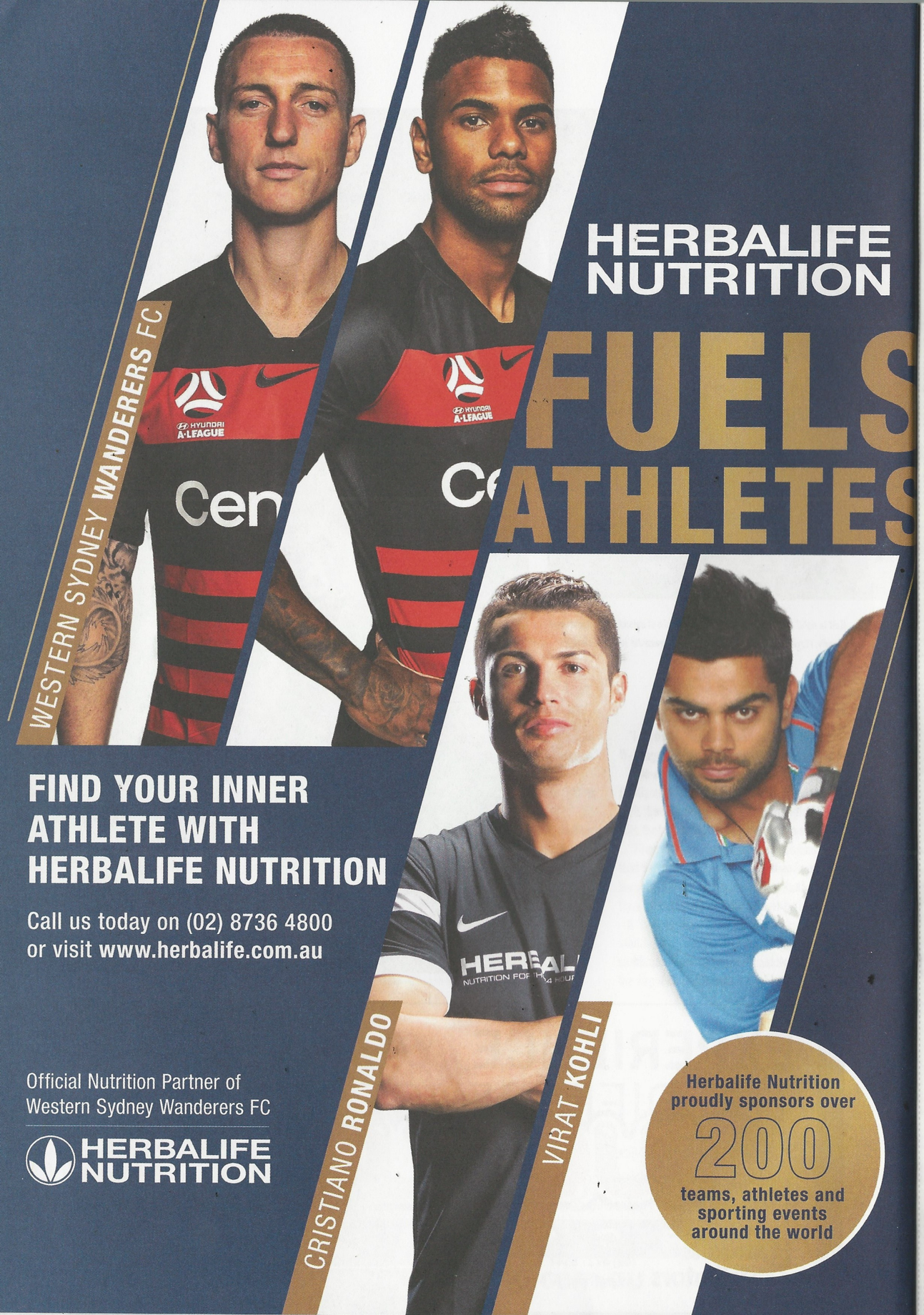

TAKE FIVE

FOLLOW SAM ON INSTAGRAM
@SAM_STAAB

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SAM STAAB ON HER FIRST SEASON OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES.

I AM ENJOYING it so much here, it's just awesome.

Sydney is a beautiful city and I have done a lot of exploring, like the Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge.

I played at (Washington) Spirit with (Matildas) Amy (Harrison), Chloe (Logarzo) and KK (Elise Kellond-Knight) and they told me a lot about Sydney and Australia in general.

It is pretty similar to home. I'm from Southern California and the lifestyle and climate are pretty similar. It is just the difference in some words in the language

Football wise it is pretty much what I expected.

It has been really awesome, so professional. The coaches are amazing and the girls are awesome.

It is everything I could have imagined.

With the NWSL (in the US), everyone is so athletic, it is so fast, so the transition hasn't been too hard here.

It has been a bit different in that the games here seem a bit slower and you work in a more methodical way.

You have to break teams down with different passes and be more patient and play up higher to break teams down.

Whereas in the NWSL, it's just like 'can we out-athlete these teams.

Maybe the only problem early on was the balls they use here which are a lot lighter to the ones used in the NWSL.

Playing alongside Alex Huynh (in the centre of defence) is really good. We get along really well off the field as well as on the field and that's really important.

We have a good combination going and we do our best to contribute to the success of the team. W

LISTEN TO OUR NEW YEAR'S DAY PLAYLIST ON SPOTIFY — SEARCH FOR WSWANDERERSFC

DON'T STOP ME NOW **QUEEN**
SIGNED, SEALED, DELIVERED **STEVIE WONDER**
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE **ONE FOUR**
FEEL IT STILL **PORTUGAL**
FEEL SO CLOSE **CALVIN HARRIS**
STAYIN ALIVE **THE BEE GEES**
NEW RULES **DUA LIPA**
DON'T LET ME DOWN **THE CHAINSMOKERS**
IT WASN'T ME **SHAGGY**
NICE FOR WHAT **DRAKE**

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ANNUAL VISIT TO THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

THE WANDERERS HYUNDAI A-League and Westfield W-League teams have helped bring smiles to the faces of many children during their annual visit to The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

Decked out in Santa hats and with plenty of presents to hand out, the players enjoyed the Christmas spirit with the kids and their families as they helped them forget their health issues for a few hours.

As an ambassador for the Children's Hospital, Wanderers defender Tarek Elrich is an old hand at these occasions and there is nothing he loves better than interacting with the kids, handing out presents and seeing the sheer happiness.

"I am an ambassador so I come here a bit more to appreciate just what the kids go through," said Elrich.

"They are the real fighters and it is just a humbling experience to be here."

Elrich was particularly taken by the reaction of the kids after they have been handed a Wanderers jersey.

"To give out a Wanderers jersey and to see them rip off his super hero shirt, replace it with the Red & Black hoops and see them so happy is really special," added Elrich.

"It makes their day."

Wanderers captain Erica Halloway has also been a regular on these occasions and it is something she always looks forward to and embraces.

"I love doing this visit every year and have been doing it for five years and I make sure I am here every time," said Halloway.

"This is probably the one thing on our calendar I love getting to.

"The kids are just amazing, they are the true heroes.

"A lot of them are going to be in hospital over Christmas and a lot of them have been in there for probably other times, like Easter and their birthdays and to just be able to put a smile on their face goes such a long way for them and their families."

Halloway also sang the praises of the Westmead staff, who are often the forgotten people.

"Walking through the wards, it is amazing to see what the staff do for the kids," said Halloway.

"They were all decked out and colourful and had all the things the kids love. I think that goes a long way for the kids and their time in here.

HELPING OUT

THIS WEEK OUR Centuria Wandercrew Volunteers of the week are Anne and Chris Baker!

Anne and Chris both help out as Match Day Programme Distributors and you can see them each week at Gates A and B handing out The Wanderer.

Each season we have over 70 passionate volunteers give up their time on Wanderers Hyundai A-League, Westfield W-League and Foxtel Y-League games to give back to the community and help us with match day.

These volunteers are part of the Centuria Wandercrew workforce and roles range from helping with our activations to taking care of the hundreds of Miniroos that take to the field every week at half-time.

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THE ULTIMATE CORPORATE EXPERIENCE

A COMBINATION OF the finest hospitality and the best atmosphere in Australian sport makes The Wanderers Experience the ultimate corporate sporting scene.

A mixture of Hyundai A-League matches including the Sydney Derbies and major club events like our Wanderers Medal allow you to network in our first class facilities – the perfect way to host your clients and guests while watching the Wanderers on stage.

CENTURIA FIELD CLUB
This is the ultimate, one of a kind Wanderland experience. Get closer to the game than ever before in our exclusive Centuria Field Club. The Centuria Field Club is located on Level 0 at the edge of the playing field with the player's tunnel cutting through the room where you can experience the player walk-out up close and person. It's an experience that is memorable.

DIRECTOR'S CLUB
Discover our elite Wanderland experience and become part of our high level Corporate Partner network. The Director's Club is the Wanderers' most exclusive offering. Centrally located on the halfway line on Level 2 with access to a private balcony, this world class corporate experience provides panoramic views of the field of play. Here is your opportunity to entertain, network and enjoy the company of industry leaders across Western Sydney.

AMBASSADOR'S LOUNGE
The ultimate social experience. This is your chance to immerse yourself in the real Wanderland atmosphere. Network and mingle with fellow Wanderers partners and guests in an unrivalled corporate experience. Positioned in close proximity to the halfway line on Level 1 with exclusive access to a private bar just metres away, there are no better seats in the house.

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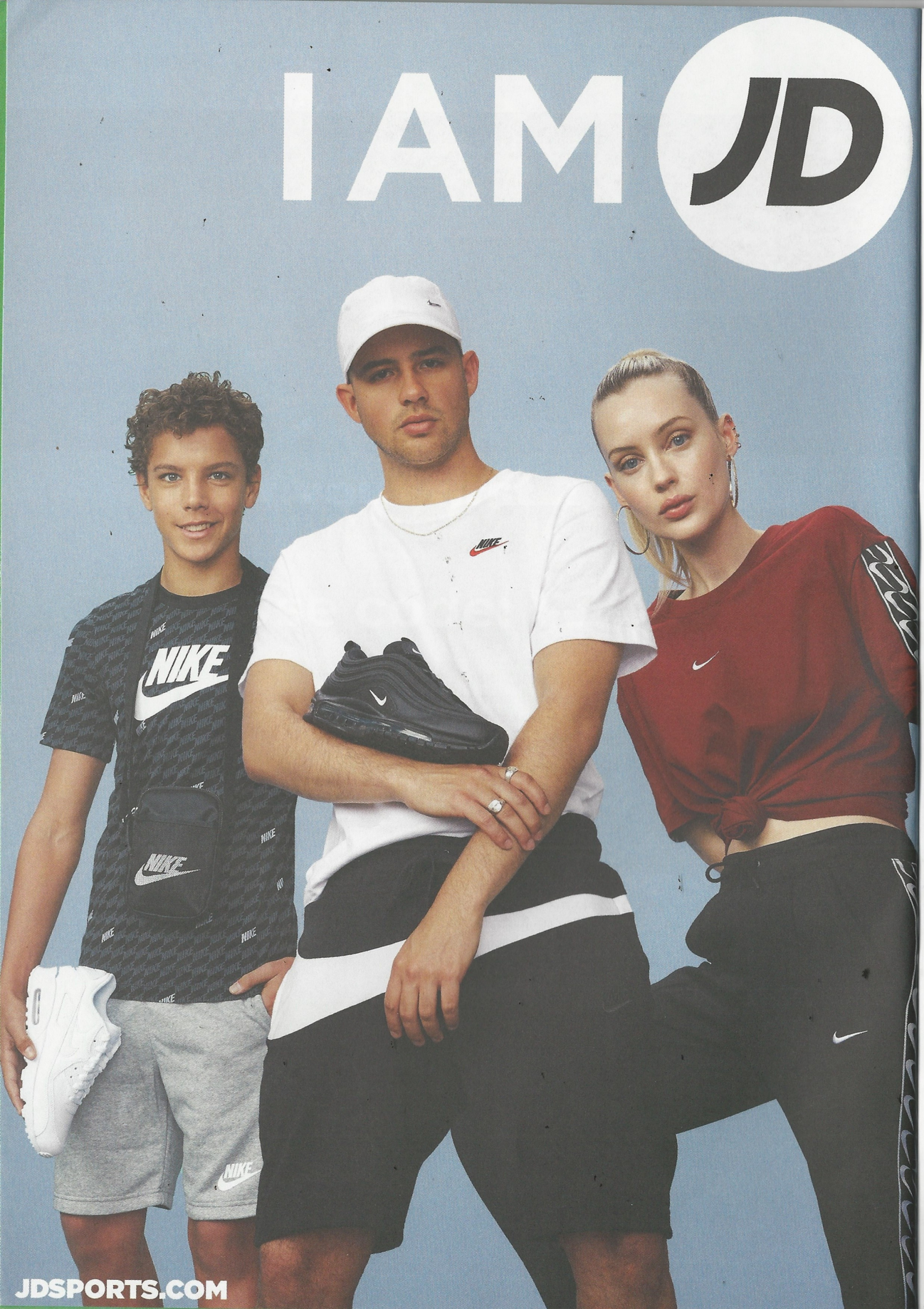

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